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# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## THE WICHITA NATIONAL FOREST AND GAME PRESERVE

BY S. M. SHANKLIN AND JAMES E. SCOTT

District 7 (Eastern District), Forest Service

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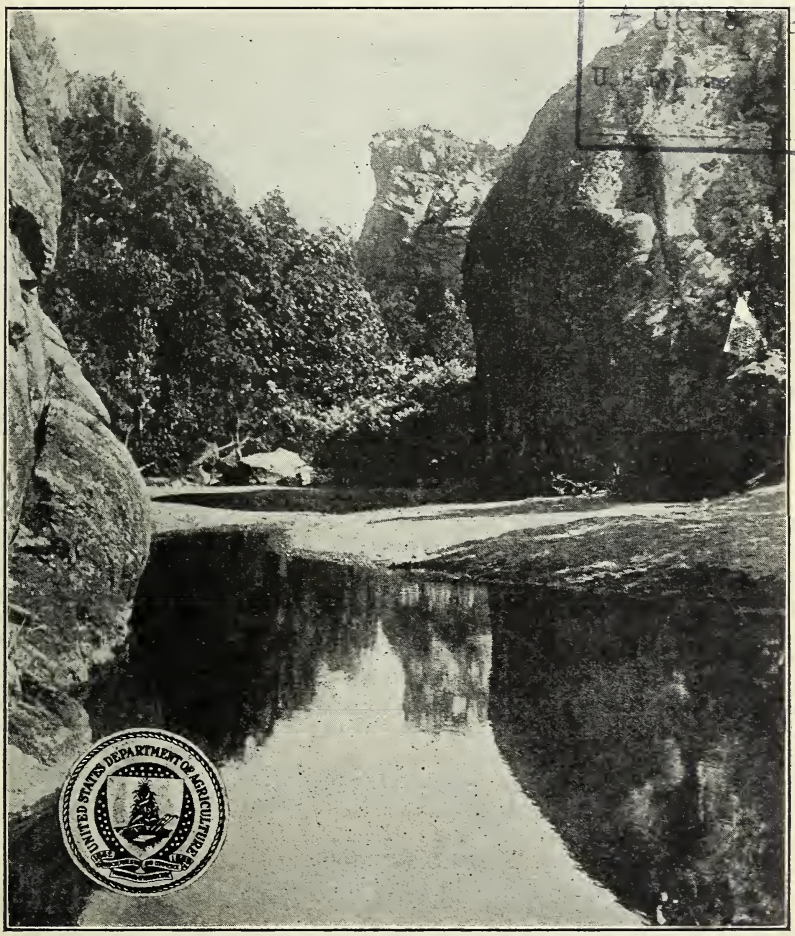

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## LOCATION

The Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve is a tract of 61,500 acres, embracing the major portion of the Wichita Mountains in southwestern Oklahoma, the entire area lying within Comanche County. It is 117 miles southwest of Oklahoma City and 60 miles north of Wichita Falls, Tex., on the Quanah Branch of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway. The Ozark Trail, a transcontinental automobile highway leading from St. Louis to Amarillo, Tex., where it intersects the Santa Fe Trail, passes 4 miles south of the forest boundary at Cache, Okla. The Meridian Highway, a north-and-south through route, comes within 6 miles to the west. The city of Lawton, Okla., is 16 miles southwest, and the Fort Sill Military Reservation (50,000 acres) adjoins the national forest on the east. From four directions—from Lawton, Cache, Hobart, and Snyder—excellent motor roads lead into the forest, where they connect with a 30-mile system of national forest roads which are now nearing completion. making every section readily accessible.

## HISTORY

Southwestern Oklahoma is rich in historical interest. Between 1850 and 1860 Generals Sheridan, McClellan, and Scott campaigned in the Wichita Mountains and the surrounding prairies against the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita Indians. Geronimo, famous Apache chief, was held a prisoner at Fort Sill for some 25 years, until his death in 1911. Quanah Parker, last chief of the Comanches, made his home immediately south of the present boundary of the Wichita National Forest for 40 years prior to his death on February 23, 1911.

The land now embraced within the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve was a part of the old Indian Territory and more particularly of the Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa Reservation. In 1901, when the reservation was thrown open to settlement, Congress set aside this tract of 61,500 acres and it was held as a forest reserve under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

The administration of the forest reserves of the United States was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture in 1905. By proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt, dated June 2, 1905, the Wichita was further designated as a national game preserve, dedicated to the preservation of wild animals and birds of national importance. President Roosevelt's proclamation was based upon a special act of Congress, approved January 24, 1905. By the act of March 4, 1907, all forest reserves were redesignated as national forests and the Wichita area became the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve.

The first supervisor for this area was Charles Johnson (1901 to 1907), the second Frank Rush (1907 to 1923). Since 1923 S. M. Shanklin has been supervisor.

## TREE GROWTH

When compared with the bountiful hardwood forests of the Appalachians, the pineries of the South, or the magnificent timber of the Pacific Northwest, the somewhat scrubby and scattered white-

oak groves of the Wichita National Forest seem insignificant. Nevertheless, when one considers the hundreds of square miles of almost treeless prairies which stretch away beyond the range of vision on all sides from the Wichita Mountains, these shady groves, sheltering springs of sparkling mountain water and affording delightful resting places for relief from the heat of the plains, assume an importance both economic and esthetic.

## WILD LIFE

### BUFFALO

In 1905 the majority of American wild-life authorities, and particularly the American Bison Society, were convinced that, unless remedial measures could be initiated, the American buffalo, or bison, which once had roamed the western plains of the United States in almost countless numbers, would soon become practically extinct. A few small herds were at that time maintained in the far West and

FIG. 1.—Buffalo bulls in the fenced pasture of the Wichita Game Preserve

Northwest, and another in the New York Zoological Park. Knowing that the newly established Wichita Game Preserve embraced some of the best grazing grounds of what was once the great southern herd of American buffalo, it occurred to Dr. William T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park, that an opportunity had been created for the founding of a Government bison herd under exceptionally favorable conditions. (Fig. 1.)

In view of the light snowfall in Oklahoma, and the fact that millions of buffalo had previously inhabited the plains of Oklahoma and Texas all the year round, subsisting by grazing, it seemed evident that it would be entirely possible for buffalo to maintain themselves on the Wichita National Forest in the same way. Since no species of large quadrupeds can be bred and perpetuated in the confinement of zoological parks and gardens, even where the inclosures are as large as those of the one in New York, it was believed that the only way to insure perpetuation of the buffalo would be through the creation of herds maintained by the Government on large areas of grazing grounds.

Doctor Hornaday therefore suggested to the New York Zoological Society that it should offer to the Federal Government, through the Secretary of Agriculture, a free gift of a herd of not less than 12 pure-blood American buffalo of various ages, to serve as the nucleus of a national herd, provided that Congress would appropriate funds for a suitable fence around a large area of range in the Wichita Preserve and maintain the animals. The suggestion met with instant approval by the society. The offer was made and cordially accepted by the Secretary of Agriculture.

In 1906 Congress appropriated $15,000 to fence an inclosure of 8,000 acres now popularly known as the Wichita buffalo pasture. Fifteen miles of 7½ foot wire fence was finished in 1907. Within the fence there are abundant grazing grounds, consisting of gently rolling prairie covered with choice mesquite grass, buffalo grass, and blue-stem. The grazing grounds are practically surrounded by several high round-topped or rock-capped hills, and cliffs and ridges of red granite. Heavy growths of blackjack oak cover most of the slopes, and near the bases of the elevations blackjack and post oak groves extend down into the level country for a quarter of a mile. In several portions of the forest there are trees 60 feet in height. The mountains, hills, and timber together afford abundant shelter for the buffalo from the fiercest storms of winter.

The most important grazing area within the inclosure is known as Winter Valley, because of its excellence as a winter range. Many buffalo wallows of early origin are found here and mesquite grass is sufficiently abundant to winter the ultimate herd to be maintained on the Wichita National Forest. The water supply on the range is ample, pure, and constant.

The eight buffalo cows and seven bulls from the New York Zoological Society were shipped from New York and received at the Wichita Game Preserve in October, 1907. The herd thrived steadily from the beginning. Two cows were lost in the early years from Texas or tick fever, and several bulls have died or have been killed in family quarrels. By 1915 the herd numbered approximately 65; in 1920 there were 150 in the pasture. By that time it had become apparent that it would soon be necessary to determine the ultimate size of the herd, since the carrying capacity of the 8,000-acre pasture had a definite limit, and particularly since in the meantime small bands of elk and antelope had been brought in and were multiplying rapidly. Accordingly, careful range estimates were prepared and a decision reached to limit the buffalo to 200 head—180 females and 20 males. The process of developing the herd to these numbers was then begun. With a view to regulating the proportion of males and females a procedure was worked out under which the surplus males are being disposed of by sale or by gift to municipalities, zoological societies, and other interested agencies. Among the donations may be mentioned 1 bull and 2 cows to the Government of Mexico in the fall of 1923, 1 bull to the city of Montevideo, Uruguay, and a return of 4 heifers, 1 yearling bull, and 1 bull calf to the New York Zoological Park. Thirty calves were born in 1923, and a year later the herd numbered 153—89 females and 64 males.

### ELK

In April, 1912, 15 elk were brought to the Wichita Game Preserve from the Jackson Hole, Wyo., elk herd. There has been a steady and remarkable growth from this original band, and the Wichita elk herd now numbers between 300 and 400 head. It has been decided that the ultimate herd of elk can not be allowed to exceed 400, and steps will probably have to be taken to dispose of surplus males each year. (Fig. 2.)

### DEER

Virginia or white-tailed deer are native to this section and were plentiful in and around the Wichita Mountains when the country was first opened to settlement. Their number had been greatly reduced when the game preserve was established in 1905, but it is now estimated that there are more than 400 within the national

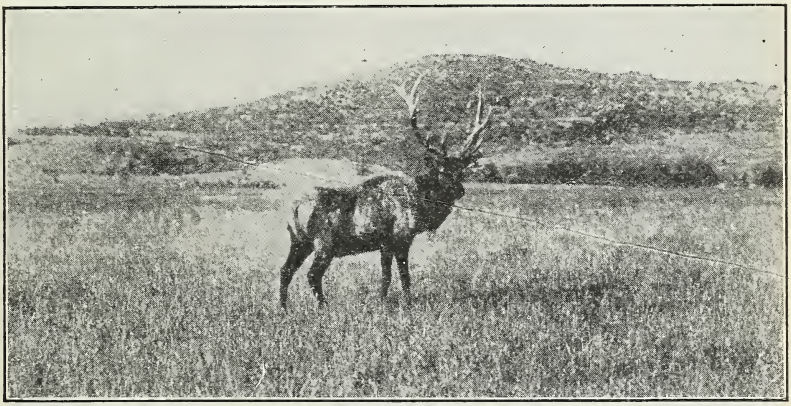


FIG. 2.—Old Wichita, king of the Wichita elk herd

forest boundaries. Five counties outside and adjoining the forest and game preserve maintain a closed season on deer, and the herd is steadily increasing.

### ANTELOPE

In cooperation with the American Bison Society, three attempts have been made to establish an antelope herd within the Wichita Game Preserve. In 1910 the Boone and Crockett Club presented 11 antelope to the Government. This little band suffered severely, however, in transit from the Yellowstone Park section where they were obtained. After their arrival at the Wichita Game Preserve they developed serious internal disorders the exact nature of which it was impossible to determine but which resulted in the gradual destruction of the entire herd.

In 1921 the American Bison Society donated to the Wichita Game Preserve 10 antelope purchased by the society from C. J. Blazier, of Alberta, Canada, whose life work in the preservation of this most interesting species is deserving of the highest commendation by every lover of wild animals. Six of these died after their arrival. In 1922,

6 more were sent from Mr. Blazier's ranch in Alberta, and of these 1 survives. Of the three shipments, therefore, of 27 antelope, but 5 are still alive. It is encouraging to note, however, that the natural increase of these 5 brought the Wichita band up to 17 head by 1924, and these are apparently in good health (fig. 3). Three pairs of twins were born in 1923 and this record was repeated in 1924. This little band of antelope constitutes one of the most appealing features of the entire game preserve. In spite of the fact that many authorities have held that it is impossible to develop a herd of this rapidly disappearing species in captivity, there is reason to hope that success will finally crown the effort being made with the little Wichita band.

FIG. 3.—The antelope herd now numbers 17 and constitutes a most interesting feature of the Wichita Game Preserve

### WILD TURKEYS

In 1912 the United States Biological Survey shipped 13 wild turkeys to the Wichita Game Preserve from Atoka, Okla. They were placed in a large inclosure where they could be given careful attention. Some of them, however, had the roup when they arrived, others took it later, and they all died except a gobbler and two hens. These were moved into a new inclosure where they were given special care and they became the nucleus of the present flock (fig. 4), which numbers at least 300. In the early days, prior to the establishment of the game preserve, wild turkeys were plentiful in this section of Oklahoma, but they were steadily reduced in number with the growing settlement of the country. The last trace of the original flocks had disappeared at least two years before the importation of the new flock into the preserve.

BIRDS

The Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve abounds in native bird life. One visitor in 1920 noted 49 different species during a single week. The tuneful notes of the song birds, together

FIG. 4.—Wild turkeys—once plentiful in Oklahoma. After years of watchful care there is a sizeable flock in the Wichita National Forest

with the marvelously beautiful colorings which these and many other varieties present to the eye of the visitor, lend added enchantment. Among the species most common are the cardinal, summer

FIG. 5.—Wild ducks at Lost Lake, Wichita National Forest

tanager, rock wren, canyon wren (rare elsewhere in the region), titmouse, nuthatch, chickadee, bluebird, and several varieties of woodpecker, crow, hawk, and owl.

## SCENERY

In scenic value the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve ranks high among the national forests of the country. Geologists affirm that the Wichita Mountains are the oldest mountain range in continental United States, and even to the untrained or unscientific eye their appearance seems to bear out this assertion. Disintegration is far advanced, and the countless strange and interesting formations, coupled with indescribably beautiful colorings resulting from the play of the elements upon the crumbling rocks, yield scenic effects at once unique and of compelling attractiveness.

Situated just aside from a main transcontinental highway, in the center of a vast open prairie country and yet within easy reach of populous sections of the Southwest, the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve is rapidly becoming a public recreation center of great importance and value.

## VALUE FOR RECREATION

About 65,000 people visited the Wichita National Forest in 1923. This number promises to increase from year to year as transportation facilities are improved, as the growing tendency to seek out and enjoy the outdoor attractions of our own country becomes more pronounced, and as the beauty and unusual elements of interest found in this forest and game preserve become more widely known and appreciated.

The Forest Service recognizes that public recreation is a major national forest resource. It invites the public to come, use, and enjoy the forests, and places no restrictions upon such use or enjoyment except the ordinary common-sense requirements as to sanitation and care with fire.

The entire forest and game preserve, aside from the buffalo pasture, is dedicated to recreational use. Six choice areas have been designated as public camp grounds and are being improved and made more convenient and enjoyable as rapidly as funds are provided to finance the necessary sanitation, water supply, and playground improvements. The use of these areas is free to all. In this work civic organizations of the towns and cities surrounding the forest are taking a most important and helpful part. The Rotarians, Kiwanians, the chambers of commerce of Lawton, Hobart, Roosevelt, and Cooperton, and the Cache Improvement Society have each undertaken to help finance the development and improvement of one of the public camp grounds within the national forest. At three of the camps swimming pools are being provided and are the most appreciated development which could be undertaken. From the camp grounds interesting trails lead to the mountain tops, and hiking is growing in popularity annually. Informal programs, radio concerts, campfire talks, and contests of various kinds enliven the hours in camp.

Among the Oklahomans who live in the cities and towns and on the plains near by there is a great and growing pride in the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve, a tremendous appreciation of its value as a public property, and a keen willingness and desire to participate in its protection and development. Some 4,000 cattle

owned by near-by cowmen range within the forest. The forested groves are cherished by the local people; they grant you that the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve is the property of all the people, but in their eyes it particularly belongs to their part of Oklahoma and the sense of prideful ownership is strong.

No matter how much one enjoys the beauty of the Wichita Range in general, the buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope, the birds, the trees and flowers, the hours in the campfire's friendly circle, no visit to this national forest is complete without a jaunt to Boulder Canyon, where West Cache Creek breaks through the mountains into the open plain. Here the forces of nature have combined to create a Garden of the Gods in miniature. The towering canyon walls, the rugged peaks, the jumble of massive bowlders, and the delicate and ever-changing colors are profoundly impressive. And with it all there is the crystal stream, edged by wooded and grass-carpeted parks—ideal camping grounds where thousands whose homes and workshops are in the cities or on the prairies may and do find rest and the joy of life close to nature in her most pleasing moods and aspects.

Regulation T–7–1: The following acts are prohibited upon any national forest lands embraced within the boundaries of a national game or bird refuge, preserve, sanctuary, or reservation established by or under authority of an act of Congress:

(A) Hunting, trapping, catching, disturbing, or killing any kind of game or nongame animal, or game or nongame bird, or taking the eggs of any such bird, except when authorized by permit issued by, under the authority of, the forester.

(B) Carrying or having possession of firearms, without the written permission of the forest supervisor or such other officer as he may designate.

(C) Permitting dogs to run at large, or having in possession dogs not in leash or confined.

(D) Camping without permit issued by a forest officer, except on areas designated as public camp grounds, or other areas which may be specifically excepted by the district forester.

## SUGGESTIONS TO VISITORS

There are no fees or charges connected with public recreation in the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve.

Forest officers are at all times ready to accord the visitor courteous and helpful attention.

Leave no camp fire before it is completely extinguished.

Use only dead and down timber for fuel.

Leave your camp site clean for the next visitor.

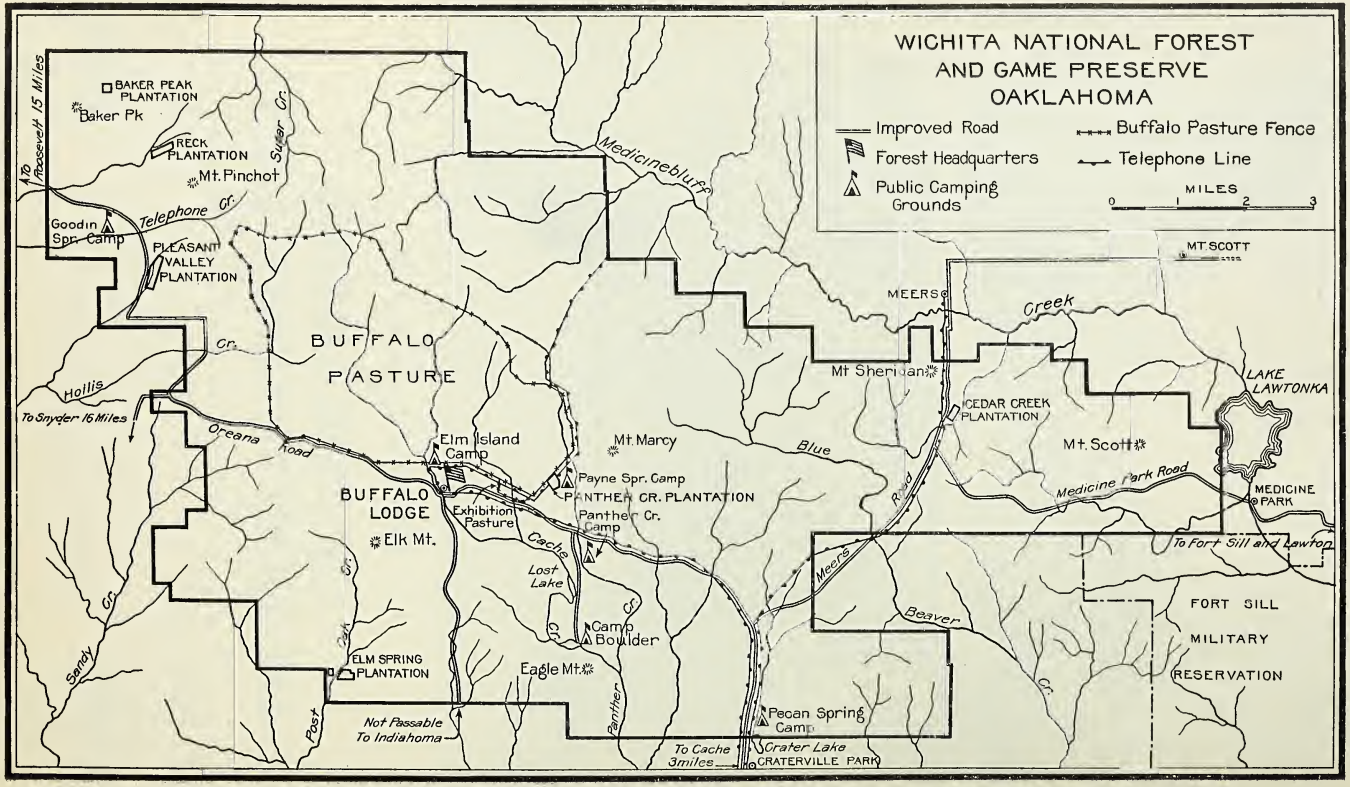
Clean up your papers and tin cans.

Do not molest the game in any way.

If a fire is discovered, try to put it out. If this can not be done, notify the forest officers at once.

See map for location of public camp grounds. A permit from a forest officer is required for camping outside of the established public camps.

**PREVENT FOREST FIRES—IT PAYS**


WICHITA NATIONAL FOREST
AND GAME PRESERVE
OAKLAHOMA
Improved Road
Forest Headquarters
Public Camping Grounds
Buffalo Pasture Fence
Telephone Line
MILES
0 1 2 3
BAKER PEAK PLANTATION
Baker Pk
RECK PLANTATION
Mt. Pinchot
Suter Cr.
Medicinebluff
Telephone Cr.
Goodin Spr. Camp
PLEASANT VALLEY PLANTATION
BUFFALO PASTURE
Hollis Cr.
To Snyder 16 Miles
Oreana Road
Elm Island Camp
Mt. Marcy
Payne Spr. Camp
PANTHER CR. PLANTATION
Panther Cr. Camp
Exhibition Pasture
BUFFALO LODGE
Elk Mt.
Cache
Lost Lake
Sandy Cr.
Camp Boulder
ELM SPRING PLANTATION
Eagle Mt.
Panther Cr.
Post Oak Cr.
Not Passable To Indiahoma
Pecan Spring Camp
To Cache 3miles
Crater Lake
CRATERVILLE PARK
MT. SCOTT
MEERS
Creek
Mt. Sheridan
CEDAR CREEK PLANTATION
LAKE LAWTONKA
Mt. Scott
Blue
Medicine Park Road
MEDICINE PARK
To Fort Sill and Lawton
Meers Road
Beaver Cr.
FORT SILL MILITARY RESERVATION

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Prepared by the Forest Service

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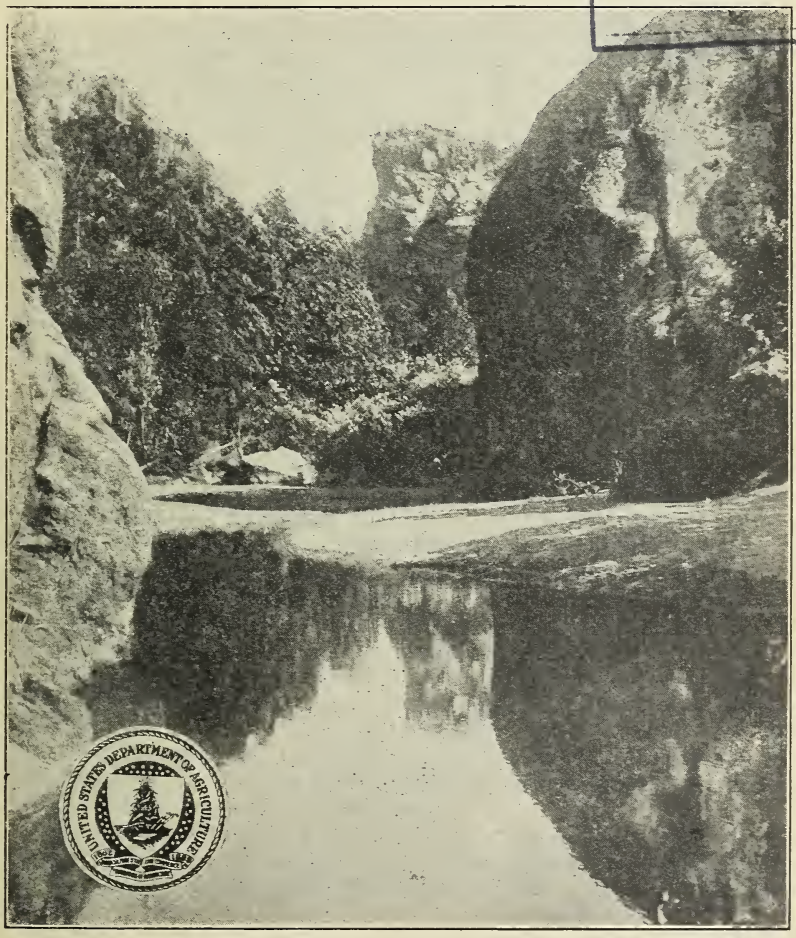


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# THE WICHITA NATIONAL FOREST AND GAME PRESERVE

## LOCATION

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## HISTORY

Southwestern Oklahoma is rich in historical interest. Between 1850 and 1860 Generals Sheridan, McClellan, and Scott campaigned in the Wichita Mountains and the surrounding prairies against the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita Indians. Geronimo, famous Apache chief, was held a prisoner at Fort Sill for some 25 years, until his death in 1911. Quanah Parker, last chief of the Comanches, made his home immediately south of the present boundary of the Wichita National Forest for 40 years prior to his death on February 22, 1911.

The land now embraced within the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve was a part of the Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa Reservation in the old Indian Territory. In 1901, when the reservation was thrown open to settlement, Congress set aside a tract of about 60,000 acres, and it was held as a forest reserve under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

The administration of the forest reserves of the United States was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture in 1905. By a proclamation of President Roosevelt, dated June 2, 1905, based upon a special act of Congress, approved January 24, 1905, the Wichita was further desig-

nated as a national game preserve, dedicated to the preservation of wild animals and birds of national importance. By the act of March 4, 1907, all forest reserves were redesignated as national forests, and the Wichita area became the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve.

## TREE GROWTH

When compared with the bountiful hardwood forests of the Appalachians, the pineries of the South, or the magnificent timber of the Pacific Northwest, the somewhat scrubby and scattered white-oak groves of the Wichita National Forest seem insignificant. Nevertheless, when one considers the hundreds of square miles of almost treeless prairies which stretch away beyond the range of vision on all sides from the Wichita Mountains, these shady groves, sheltering springs of sparkling mountain water and affording delightful resting places for relief from the heat of the plains, take on great importance both economically and æsthetically.

## TREE PLANTING

About 15 years ago six plantations were started on the forest. These are designated as Cedar Creek planting, Panther Creek planting, Elm Springs planting, Pleasant Valley planting, Reck planting, and Baker Peak planting. Native juniper, osage orange, black and honey locust, black walnut, and mulberry were planted. Some of the plantations have been very successful and are among the show spots of the forest. The juniper and osage orange plantations known as Cedar Creek planting and Elm Springs planting are almost perfect stands with forest conditions completely established.

These planted groves serve as excellent refuges for birds and game and have justified themselves from that standpoint alone. A more extensive program of planting is being considered on the basis of economic as well as wild-life value.

## LIVESTOCK GRAZING

About 2,600 head of cattle owned by ranchers in the vicinity of the forest graze during the summer season in pastures which are not needed for the wild game. Grazing on the forest is an essential part of the livestock industry of the region and is handled by means of permits issued to the owners.

## LONGHORN CATTLE

The first cattle to set foot on America's shores were brought in by the Spanish in 1521. These were calves which became the progenitors of the millions of longhorn cattle that spread rapidly, fanwise, from Vera Cruz over the coastal plains of Texas and the Great Plains regions to the far West. They thrived from the very first, until Texas at the close of the Civil War was overflowing with longhorn cattle. From the Gulf to Canada this hardy breed pressed the Indian and buffalo back until the whole country was theirs. In the course of progress, however, they had to give way to improved breeds, and in a comparatively few years were becoming extinct

During the summer of 1927, through the aid of a small appropriation by Congress, a few of these animals (figs. 1 and 3) were picked up after considerable search in the lower Rio Grande region and along the Gulf coast in Texas. They have been placed on the Wichita National Forest and will serve as a nucleus from which a herd of from 200 to 300 head can be built up for future generations of Americans to study and admire.

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FIG. 1.—One of the original longhorn herd placed in the Wichita National Forest.

## WILD LIFE

### BUFFALO

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sures are as large as those in New York, it was believed that the only way to insure perpetuation of the buffalo would be through the creation of herds maintained by the Government on large areas of grazing grounds. The establishment of the Wichita Game Preserve suggested to William T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park, that an opportunity had been created for building up a Government bison herd under exceptionally favorable conditions, because the preserve embraced some of the best grazing grounds of what had once been the great southern herd of American buffalo. In view of the light snowfall in Oklahoma and of the fact that millions of buffalo had previously inhabited the plains of Oklahoma and Texas all the year round, subsisting by grazing, it seemed evident that the buffalo could maintain themselves on the Wichita National Forest.

Doctor Hornaday therefore suggested to the New York Zoological Society that it offer to the Federal Government, through the Secretary of Agriculture, a free gift of a herd of not less than 12 pure-blood American buffalo of various ages, to serve as the nucleus of a national

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FIG. 2.—Buffalo bulls in the fenced pasture of the Wichita Game Preserve

herd, provided that Congress would appropriate funds for a suitable fence around a large area of range in the Wichita preserve and would maintain the animals. The suggestion met with instant approval by the society. The offer was made and was cordially accepted by the Secretary of Agriculture.

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The most important grazing area within the inclosure is known as Winter Valley because of its excellence as a winter range. Many old buffalo wallows are found there, and mesquite grass is sufficiently abundant under normal climatic conditions to winter the herd ultimately to be maintained on the Wichita National Forest. The water supply on the range is ample, pure, and constant.

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FIG. 3.—Texas longhorns F-219297

carrying capacity of the 8,000-acre pasture has a definite limit. Also in the meantime small bands of elk and a herd of antelope had been brought in and the elk were multiplying rapidly. Accordingly, careful range estimates were prepared and a decision reached to limit the buffalo to 200 head—180 females and 20 males. With a view to regulating the proportion of males and females a procedure was worked out under which the surplus males could be disposed of by sale or by gift to municipalities, zoological societies, and other interested agencies. Among the donations may be mentioned 1 bull and 2 cows to the Government of Mexico in the fall of 1923, 1 bull to the city of Montevideo, Uruguay, and a return of 4 heifers, 1 yearling bull, and 1 bull calf to the New York Zoological Park. Thirty calves

were born in 1923, and there was a gradual increase each succeeding season until the calf crop in 1926 numbered 42 head, making a total of over 200 head at the end of that year.

### ELK

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FIG. 4.—Old Wichita, king of the Wichita elk herd F-185921

### DEER

Virginia or white-tailed deer are native to this section and were plentiful in and around the Wichita Mountains when the country was first opened to settlement. Their number had been greatly reduced when the game preserve was established in 1905, but it is now estimated that there are more than 400 within the national-forest boundaries. Five counties outside and adjoining the forest and game preserve maintain a closed season on deer, and the herd is steadily increasing. State game refuges established in 1927 contiguous to the forest afford additional protection not only to deer but to other forms of wild life such as wild turkey, quail, waterfowl, etc.

### ANTELOPE

In cooperation with the American Bison Society, three attempts have been made to establish an antelope herd within the Wichita Game Preserve. In 1910 the Boone and Crockett Club presented 11 antelope to the Government. This little band suffered severely, however, in transit from the Yellowstone Park section where they were obtained. After their arrival at the Wichita Game Preserve they developed serious internal disorders, the exact nature of which it was impossible to determine but which resulted in the gradual destruction of the entire herd.

In 1921 the American Bison Society donated to the Wichita Game Preserve 10 antelope purchased by the society from C. J. Blazier, of Alberta, Canada, whose life work in the preservation of this most interesting species deserves the highest commendation. Six of the 10 died after their arrival. In 1922, 6 more were sent from Mr. Blazier's ranch in Alberta, and of these 1 survives. Therefore, of the 27 antelope shipped to the preserve but 5 are still alive. It is encouraging, however, that the natural increase of these 5 brought the Wichita band up to 17 head by 1924, all apparently in good health. Three pairs of twins were born in 1923 and this record was repeated in 1924. At the end of 1926 there was a total of 27 head. (Fig. 5.) This little band of antelope constitutes one of the most appealing

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FIG. 5.—The antelope herd now numbers 27 and constitutes a most interesting feature of the Wichita Game Preserve

features of the entire game preserve. Though many authorities have held that it is impossible to develop a herd of this rapidly disappearing species in captivity, there is reason to hope that the efforts being made with the little Wichita band will be successful.

### EXHIBITION PASTURE

An exhibition pasture has been set aside on the forest where several animals of each species are kept and may be seen by the public. In the other large pastures it is impossible at times to see the animals, as they have a tendency to get away from convenient observation points. Besides, many parts of the large pastures have broken and rough topography, accessible only by horseback and in some instances per-

mitting travel only on foot. As for the buffalo, he is a dangerous animal, never to be trusted, and it is unsafe for those not familiar with his habits to enter the buffalo pastures.

### WILD TURKEYS

In 1912 the United States Bureau of Biological Survey shipped 13 wild turkeys to the Wichita Game Preserve from Atoka, Okla. They were placed in a large inclosure where they could be given careful attention. Some of them, however, had the roup when they arrived, others took it later, and they all died except a gobbler and two hens. These were moved into a new inclosure where they were given special care, and they became the nucleus of the present flock, which numbers at least 300. (Fig. 6.) In the early days, prior to the establishment of the game preserve, wild turkeys were plentiful in this section of Oklahoma, but they were steadily reduced in number with the

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FIG. 6.—Wild turkeys—once plentiful in Oklahoma. After years of watchful care there is a sizeable flock in the Wichita National Forest

growing settlement of the country. The last trace of the original flocks had disappeared at least two years before the importation of the new flock into the preserve.

### BIRDS

The Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve abounds in native bird life. One visitor in 1920 noted 49 different species during a single week. Among the species most common are the cardinal, summer tanager, rock wren, canyon wren (rare elsewhere in the region), titmouse, nuthatch, chickadee, bluebird, and several varieties of woodpecker, crow, hawk, and owl.

### SCENERY

In scenic value the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve ranks high among the national forests of the country. The Wichita Mountains, according to geologists, are the oldest mountain range in continental United States, and even to the unscientific eye their

appearance seems to bear out this assertion. Disintegration is far advanced, and the countless strange and interesting formations coupled with indescribably beautiful colorings resulting from the play of the elements upon the crumbling rocks, yield scenic effects at once unique and of compelling attractiveness.

## VALUE FOR RECREATION

Situated just aside from a main transcontinental highway, in the center of a vast open-prairie country and yet within easy reach of populous sections of the Southwest, the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve is rapidly becoming a public recreation center of great value. The Forest Service recognizes that public recreation is an important national-forest resource. It invites the public to come, use, and enjoy the forests and places no restrictions upon such

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FIG. 7.—Wild ducks at Lost Lake, Wichita National Forest

use or enjoyment except the ordinary common-sense requirements as to sanitation and care with fire.

The area lying to the south of the Scenic highway, known as the Lost Lake and Camp Boulder region, is dedicated to recreational use. Six choice areas have been designated as public camp grounds and are being made more convenient and enjoyable as rapidly as funds are provided to finance the necessary sanitation, water supply, and playground improvements. The use of these areas is free to all. In this work civic organizations of the towns and cities surrounding the forest are taking a most important and helpful part. The Rotarians, Kiwanians, the Chambers of Commerce of Lawton, Hobart, Roosevelt, and Cooperton, and the Cache Improvement Society have each undertaken to help finance the development and improvement of one of the public camp grounds within the national forest. At three of the camps swimming pools are provided and are the most appreciated development that could be undertaken. From the camp grounds interesting trails lead to the mountain tops, and hiking is

growing in popularity. Informal programs, radio concerts, campfire talks, and contests of various kinds enliven the hours in camp.

On May 31, 1926, the dam forming what is known as Lost Lake was completed, and on this date it was dedicated and formally presented to the United States Forest Service by the citizens of Lawton, who had contributed the $6,000 necessary to build it. The Cache Improvement Society, composed of citizens of Cache, also contributed $600 for the construction of the Panther Creek Dam, which adds materially to the attractiveness of the Wichita and forms a most picturesque swimming pool for public use.

The Wild Life Institute fostered by the University of Oklahoma and other agencies and organizations of the State, meets annually at Camp Boulder and conducts a series of lectures and field trips designed to give practical help to teachers of science in the public schools, to Boy Scout leaders, and to all nature lovers. The work of the Wild Life Institute, while affording delightful recreation, has a serious purpose. All of the interested agencies take an active part in the summer camp, and the various species of wild life and the geological formations in the "Wichitas" afford a wonderful opportunity for study.

Among the Oklahomans who live in the cities and towns and on the plains near by there is a great and growing pride in the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve, a tremendous appreciation of its value as a public property, and a keen willingness and desire to participate in its protection and development. The forested groves are cherished by the local people. They grant that the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve is the property of all the people, but in their eyes it particularly belongs to their part of Oklahoma, and the sense of prideful ownership is strong.

No matter how much one enjoys the beauty of the Wichita Range in general, the buffalo, longhorn cattle, elk, deer, and antelope, the birds, the trees and flowers, the hours in the camp fire's friendly circle, no visit to this national forest is complete without a jaunt to Boulder Canyon, where West Cache Creek breaks through the mountains into the open plain. Here the forces of nature have combined to create a Garden of the Gods in miniature. The towering canyon walls, the rugged peaks, the jumble of massive bowlders, and the delicate and ever-changing colors are profoundly impressive. And with it all there is the crystal stream, edged by wooded and grass-carpeted parks—ideal camping grounds where thousands whose homes and workshops are in the cities or on the prairies may and do find rest and the joy of life close to nature in her most pleasing moods and aspects.

## PREVENT FOREST FIRES—IT PAYS

### SIX RULES FOR PREVENTING FIRE IN THE FORESTS

1. *Matches.*—Be sure your match is out. Break it in two before you throw it away.

2. *Tobacco.*—Be sure that pipe ashes and cigar or cigarette stubs are dead before throwing them away. Never throw them into brush, leaves, or needles.

3. *Making camp.*—Before building a fire, scrape away all inflammable material from a spot 5 feet in diameter. Dig a hole in the center and in it build your camp fire. Keep your fire small. Never build it against trees or logs or near brush.

4. *Breaking camp.*—Never break camp until your fire is out—dead out.

5. *Brush burning.*—Never burn slash or brush in windy weather or while there is the slightest danger that the fire will get away.

6. *How to put out a camp fire.*—Stir the coals while soaking them with water. Turn small sticks and drench both sides. Wet the ground around the fire. Be sure the last spark is dead.

Regulation T–7–1: The following acts are prohibited upon any national forest lands embraced within the boundaries of a national game or bird refuge, preserve, sanctuary, or reservation established by or under authority of an act of Congress:

(A) Hunting, trapping, catching, disturbing, or killing any kind of game or nongame animal, or game or nongame bird, or taking the eggs of any such bird, except when authorized by permit issued by or under the authority of the Forester.

(B) Carrying or having possession of firearms without the written permission of the forest supervisor or such other officer as he may designate.

(C) Permitting dogs to run at large or having in possession dogs not in leash or confined.

(D) Camping without permit issued by a forest officer, except on areas designated as public camp grounds, or other areas which may be specifically excepted by the district forester.

## SIX RULES FOR HEALTH PROTECTION

1. *Purification.*—Mountain streams will not purify themselves in a few hundred feet. Boil or chlorinate all suspected water.

2. *Garbage.*—Burn or bury all garbage, papers, tin cans, and old clothes.

3. *Excretions.*—Bury a foot deep all human excrement at least 200 feet from streams, lakes, or springs.

4. *Washings.*—Do not wash soiled clothing, utensils, or bodies in streams, lakes, or springs. Use a container and throw dirty water on the ground away from the water supply.

5. *Toilets.*—Use public toilets where available. They are properly located. Toilets should be at least 100 feet from streams and not in gulches.

6. *Obeying laws.*—Observe rules and endeavor to have others do the same. National and State laws impose heavy penalties for health-law violations. Report all violations or insanitary conditions (including dead animals) to the nearest health officer or United States Forest Service officer

## SUGGESTIONS TO VISITORS

There are no fees or charges connected with public recreation in the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve.

Forest officers are at all times ready to accord the visitor courteous and helpful attention.

Leave no camp fire before it is completely extinguished.

Use only dead-and-down timber for fuel.

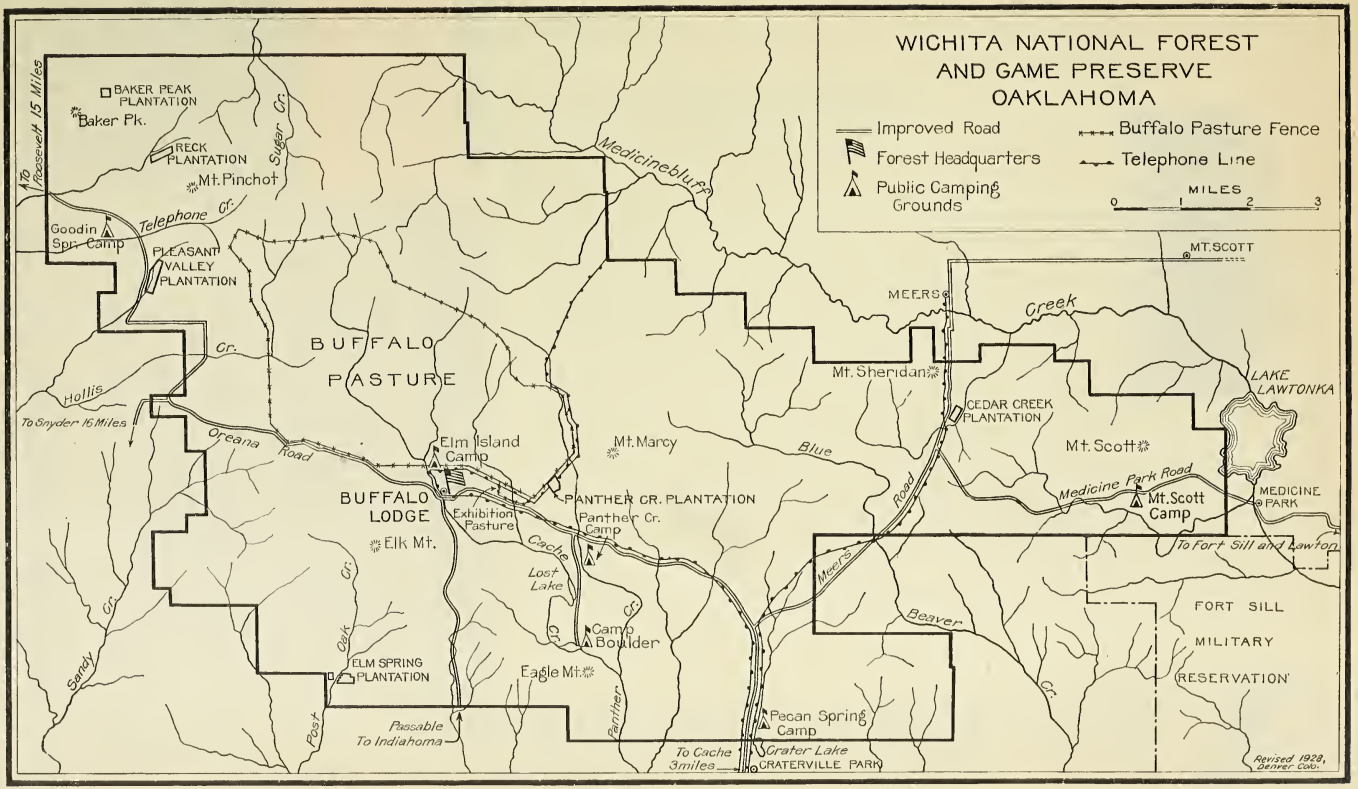
Leave your camp site clean for the next visitor.

Clean up your papers and tin cans.

Do not molest the game in any way.

If a fire is discovered try to put it out. If this can not be done notify the forest officers at once.

See map for location of public camp grounds. A permit from a forest officer is required for camping outside of the established public camps.


WICHITA NATIONAL FOREST
AND GAME PRESERVE
OAKLAHOMA
Improved Road
Forest Headquarters
Public Camping Grounds
Buffalo Pasture Fence
Telephone Line
MILES
0
1
2
3
To Roosevelt 15 Miles
BAKER PEAK PLANTATION
Baker Pk.
RECK PLANTATION
Mt. Pinchot
Sugar Cr.
Telephone Cr.
Goodin Spr. Camp
PLEASANT VALLEY PLANTATION
Medicinebluff
MT. SCOTT
MEERS
Creek
Cr.
BUFFALO PASTURE
Hollis
To Snyder 16 Miles
Oreana Road
Elm Island Camp
Mt. Marcy
Mt. Sheridan
CEDAR CREEK PLANTATION
LAKE LAWTONKA
Blue
Mt. Scott
Medicine Park Road
Mt. Scott Camp
MEDICINE PARK
BUFFALO LODGE
Exhibition Pasture
PANTHER CR. PLANTATION
Panther Cr. Camp
Elk Mt.
Cache
Lost Lake
Meers Road
To Fort Sill and Lawton
Sandy Cr.
Oak Cr.
Camp Boulder
Beaver
FORT SILL MILITARY RESERVATION
ELM SPRING PLANTATION
Eagle Mt.
Panther Cr.
Post
Passable To Indiahoma
Pecan Spring Camp
To Cache 3 miles
Crater Lake
CRATERVILLE PARK
Revised 1928, Denver Colo.